

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

January 17, 2006

Upon Recess of BMA

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll. There were thirteen Aldermen present.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Long, Duval, Osborne, Pinard, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith and Forest

Absent: Alderman Thibault

Messrs.: Robert MacKenzie

Mayor Guinta addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. CIP Budget Authorizations:

210306	Homeless Health Care
610406	Project Greenstreets

Alderman Garrity moved to approve the CIP budget authorizations. Alderman O'Neil duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Gatsas asked can I have a discussion on the Homeless Health Care... can I hear from somebody, whoever...anybody here to speak on it...this is the \$275,000.

Mr. Robert MacKenzie, Director of Planning, stated the only reason this is before you is because it was approved before the amount of funds from the state was reduced...this is actually the specific amount that the city received for Homeless Health Care.

Mayor Guinta asked was it through the state or through HUD?

Mr. MacKenzie replied this is directly from the state. I do see Rich DiPentima here that can probably verify that but I think all of those funds do come through the state.

Mr. Richard DiPentima, Deputy Public Health Director, stated I did not hear your question.

Mayor Guinta replied my question was is this HUD money that's a pass through to the city or is it directly from the state?

Mr. DiPentima stated this is not HUD money this comes directly to the city and we pass it through a contract that we have with Catholic Medical Center (CMC) who operates our Homeless Health Care project.

Alderman Gatsas asked can you be a little bit more specific...you pass it onto Catholic Medical Center to take care of...

Mr. DiPentima stated we have a contract with Catholic Medical Center and they operates what's called a Homeless Health Care project for us...the mobile community team and they have the staff that's hired through Catholic Medical Center to operate this. We've had it for about 10 years now...money to operate this program. It's been contracted out to CMC for that period of time. We don't keep any of the money in-house at this point...almost 100% flow through from the feds to the Health Department to CMC.

Alderman Gatsas asked can you be a little bit more specific with what CMC does with the money.

Mr. DiPentima replied they hire staff and they operate out of some of the homeless shelters in the community, they do TB skin testing, they do primary care services for homeless folks, they do health assessments, they do health education... basically, provide primary health care services to homeless people and their families.

Alderman Gatsas asked does that keep them out of the emergency room?

Mr. DiPentima replied I hope it keeps them out of the emergency room...we also use through the graces of the Health Department at Dartmouth Hitchcock provides most of the specialty care services that are provided to these folks when they need referral to specialty care...Dartmouth Hitchcock has been able to provide that to them. So, it's been a wonderful win/win situation for the homeless population and for the taxpayers.

Alderman Shea asked how are these people identified...who does the identifying of these people?

Mr. DiPentima replied we have outreach workers that work with the project and they work through the shelters that are in the community and some of the other facilities...they coordinate with homeless facilities around the state and we get referrals through multiple means through the emergency rooms, through hospitals and other service organizations in the community...the School District is another key way we learn about homeless children or families in transition to keep them in school and healthy.

Alderman Shea asked do you have a handle on how many homeless people we do have in Manchester...a ballpark figure?

Mr. DiPentima replied that's a very difficult question to answer because it depends on what you define and how you define homelessness. We probably, at any given time, at least a few hundred people but it may be more than that when you look at people who are doubling up with other families in the community who may have lost their job, lost their ability to pay for homes and now are living with family... they are considered in some ways homeless even though they're not what we would consider to be out on the street living out of a shopping cart.

Alderman Shea stated we hear about...particularly when the weather gets bad about people who are homeless and they go to different places...sometimes they can't always be accommodated because of an overflow and so further whether it be in Concord or Portsmouth or Manchester...we do have facilities for these people but you're saying that there are other people who are not going to these places but can be identified as homeless because they live out of a car or maybe a van or under a bridge or someplace like that.

Mr. DiPentima stated that's the extreme case of homelessness. Most of the people that are homeless in the fact that they've lost their primary residence and may be living with other family members or friends on a temporary basis until they can reestablish their financial security.

Mayor Guinta called for a vote on the motion to approve the CIP budget authorizations. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Committee on Finance, on motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee